



I-90 Hyak to Easton Project

May/June 2000

Issue 2

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“THE BULLETIN”

UPDATE

WSDOT held two scoping meetings in the Cle Elum area, one public and one for state and federal agencies. We received numerous comments on the project. We appreciate and value the input and are currently working on responding to those communications. As a result of the comments that were received during scoping, some issues have been revised.

- **LOGICAL TERMINI**

The ending project limits have now been extended from milepost 67.5 at the top of Easton Hill to milepost 70.0 in the West Easton Road interchange vicinity.

- **PROJECT LEVEL EIS**

WSDOT had proposed a programmatic or tiered Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Due to concerns that this would not provide sufficient detailed information for agencies to make comments or permitting decisions under the programmatic approach, WSDOT will now be preparing a project level EIS.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS MOVES FORWARD

In our last newsletter, we reported that the South Central Region had appointed an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT), to advise and consult on a variety of issues. We also informed you that WSDOT and FHWA had initiated the Environmental Impact Statement for this project.

In an effort to streamline the environmental procedure, a policy was adopted in 1992 integrating the Clean Water Act Section 404 permit process and other related permitting and certification procedures into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Presently, we are working with other signatory agencies under the NEPA/SEPA/404 Merger agreement. This committee is known as the Signatory Agency Committee, or SAC.

Utilizing the merger agreement will allow us to:

- Provide for early involvement of resource and regulatory agencies and the public in the WSDOT project scoping and development process.
- Provide for joint-agency evaluation and early resolution of problems/issues.
- Reduce duplication of effort.
- Provide increased environmental protection.
- Obtain anticipated permits and approvals in a timely manner

Currently, we are moving to request concurrence from the Signatory Agency Committee (SAC), for the first concurrence point. A concurrence point is a point within the process where the transportation agency requests formal concurrence. The signatory agencies can elect to concur, not concur, or decide not to participate at that stage. If there is concurrence, agencies are expected to furnish written determination that the information presented to date is adequate for this stage of development and the project may proceed to the next stage without modification.

A finding of nonconcurrence would be a written determination that would provide an explanation for such action. In such an instance, agencies will attempt to resolve the issues informally before entering into conflict resolution.

The first concurrence point will be for:

- Project Purpose and Need
- Criteria for Alternative Selection
- Role of all Agencies
- Revised EIS scope

WSDOT South Central Region anticipates responses to this concurrence by the next scheduled SAC meeting in June.

AGENCY ROLES

We have received many questions about other agencies and the role they will play in the EIS. Listed below are the agencies and their role.

STATE AGENCIES

WSDOT - Washington State Department of Transportation. Project proponent and lead SEPA agency. Responsible for preparing the EIS as well as related project documentation, and ensuring compliance with all applicable permits.

WSDOE - Washington State Department of Ecology. Responsible for issuing water quality permits as well as environmental review.

WDF&W - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Represented on the IDT. Responsible for Hydraulic Project Approval. Will provide consultation regarding fisheries habitat and threatened and endangered species that may be in the project corridor.

OAHP & SHPO

Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development - Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation - Consultant compliance role under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Under Section 106, an historical/archaeological excavation may be required. If this excavation would alter or remove Native American or archaeological resources, OAHP would issue permit.

FEDERAL AGENCIES INVOLVED

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration - Lead Agency. As part of the EIS, FHWA would review potential impacts and proposed mitigation measures. In cooperation with WSDOT, FHWA will approve the contents of the Final EIS.

NMFS - National Marine Fisheries Service - Will provide consultation regarding threatened and endangered species, as well as make mitigation recommendations in line with the Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act.

USACE - United States Army Corps of Engineers - Cooperating agency role under NEPA. Reviewing agency for wetland issues and other special aquatic sites. Will verify delineation of wetland boundaries, as well as review the final mitigation plan before issuance of the Final EIS.

EPA - United States Environmental Protection Agency - Provide consultation on a number of environmental issues especially as they relate to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Clean Air Act (CAA).

USF&W - United States Fish and Wildlife Service Represented on the IDT. Provide mitigation and enhancement recommendations in relation to the Endangered Species Act as well as the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

USBOR - United States Bureau of Reclamation. Cooperating agency under NEPA. Project may also require land use action by the Bureau.

USFS - United States Forest Service. Represented on the IDT. Cooperating agency under NEPA. May provide land use action.

Yakama, Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, and Tulalip Tribes

The tribes will be asked to comment on the NEPA/SEPA document. Though it does not appear that the project will be constructed on tribal lands, project construction on non-tribal lands may still affect treaty-reserved resources or areas of tribal significance. Agencies have an obligation and responsibility to consult with tribal governments during the project review process. Archaeological and Cultural Resource consultation will be conducted with the tribes. Compliance with Federal requirements regarding cultural resources will also help protect tribal resources.

Local Agencies

Kittitas County

Kittitas County will be responsible for permitting and plan development on lands outside incorporated areas of any city within the project limits. This would include compliance under the following:

- Kittitas County's critical areas ordinance regulates construction activities and any corresponding mitigation within sensitive areas.

The Kittitas county shoreline master program regulates development which affects shorelines of statewide significance within Kittitas county. Construction activities and corresponding mitigation are regulated through the substantial development permitting process.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Receive concurrence from the SAC for the first concurrence point.
- Develop Alternatives for evaluation by IDT
- IDT to continue work on criteria and alternatives for selection.

WHERE TO FIND INFORMATION ON THE HYAK TO EASTON PROJECT:

It is a major emphasis of the WSDOT to keep the public well informed of ongoing projects. To ensure that the public has access to all the current information, and answers to their questions we have put together a variety of informational resources.



-Newsletter **I-90 Bulletin**
-Web Site - www.wsdot.wa.gov/regions/southcentral/I90Snoqualmie
-Toll free telephone - [1-888-535-0738](tel:1-888-535-0738)

Get on our mailing list !!

Sign up at our website or use the toll free phone number and request our project newsletter.

TRANSCRIPTS AVAILABLE

Transcripts of our public meetings will be available from the Project Engineer's office. In accordance with WAC16-06-200, there will be a charge of fifteen cents per page of copy when charges exceed ten dollars. If you would like us to mail the transcript to you, this amount is payable when ordering, or you can download the transcript from our website. Following each public meeting we will attempt to have the transcript converted to an Adobe Acrobat format and posted on our website as soon as possible to allow you to download it at your convenience.

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